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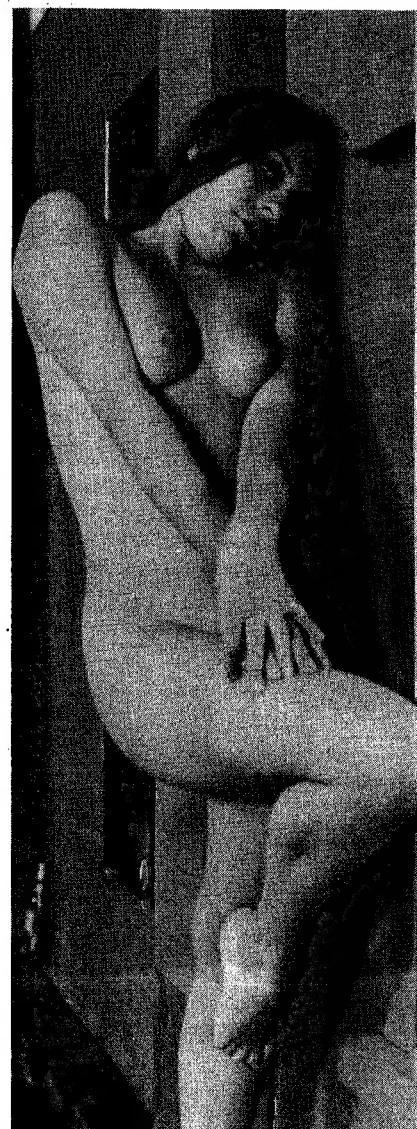
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She was the most beautiful woman
he'd ever seen—and very
probably a Commie out to get him!

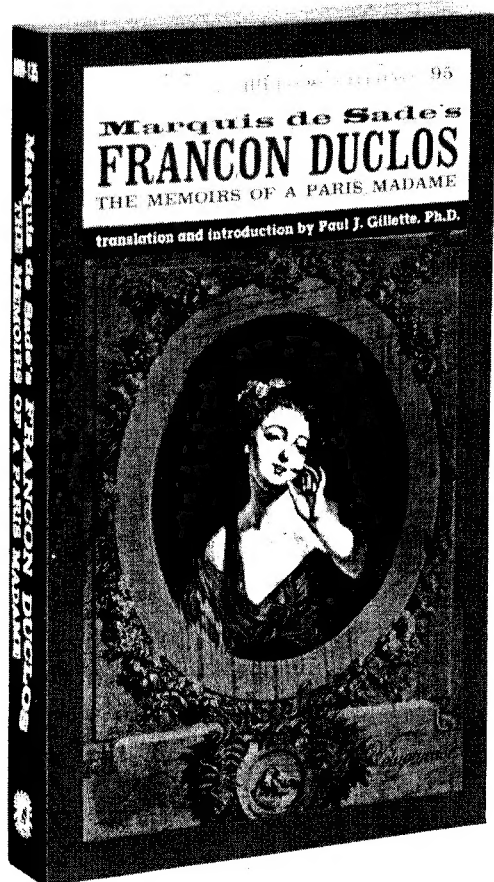
HUNGARY for LOVE

by JACK RITCHIE

I HAVE NEVER SEEN anyone who could make a broad jump like Miklos and now here he was in America. ■ After I picked him up at the hotel in which his delegation was quartered, I drove away, making many turns and even going around some blocks. Finally I made the announcement. "Miklos, I think we are being followed." ■ He looked back and nodded. "Of course. That is Comrade Horvath." ■ Through my rear view mirror I could not make out the driver, for he skillfully remained at least one and a half blocks behind me at all times. ■ "So, Miklos," I said, "they allow you to leave the hotel, but it is evident they still do not trust you." ■ "They do not trust anyone, Ferencz," Miklos said. "Where is this place, your apartment?" ■ "Not far. Just past the sign of the curve ahead." ■ He was immediately interested. "In capitalist America they advertise even these?" ■ It was a moment before I real-

—turn the page

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HUNGARY, from page 31

ized to what he referred. I made a more careful pronunciation. "Not *curva*. It is *curve*—a turning of the road."

In Hungarian, *curva* refers to a woman who pursues her trade even on Sundays. In English, her title is a peculiar word which is spelled with a *w*, but pronounced with an *h*.

"Does this Horvath have a gun?" I asked.

Miklos nodded. "It is standard."

As we drove, I could see that Miklos was very much impressed with America, no matter what the color of their hair.

"How was the trip?" I asked.

"There was some difficulty with the seating arrangements in the airplane. The Czechs would not sit with the Poles, the Bulgarians would not sit with the Rumanians, and the Hungarians would not sit with the Russians."

What has happened is that another international sports meet has come to America in which east competes with the west in a spirit of friendly rivalry if you win. Miklos was representing Hungary in the broad jump, or, as it is sometimes called, the long jump.

After the unsuccessful revolution in our country, I chose to leave and cross the border to freedom. I was then what you call a "teenager" and so was Miklos. He remained behind, however, because he claimed he could not leave his father, his mother, his brothers, and his sisters behind. There were also several girls who were not relatives.

At a stop sign, Miklos watched another part of America walk by. "This function at your apartment, it is a martini party of welcome?"

I nodded. "I will introduce you to Annuska Nemeth. She is a librarian, but do not take that too seriously. And there is Illonka Kozopan, who was Miss Harvest Festival last year for the Hoboken Hungarian Cultural Society."

Miklos frowned. "Nemeth? Kozopan? I did not travel thousands of miles merely to meet other Hungarians. Especially women. Have you no acquaintances who are not Hungarian?"

"Well," I said, "Possibly there is some dysplasia in my friendship profile. I imagine this occurred when I picked up a few easy credits by joining the Hungarian Language class at the university. It was a very sociable group, but it seems that nobody but Hungarians seem to be interested in Hungarian." I thought for a moment. "There was one Swede in our class, but he had filled out the wrong class registration card and besides, he got a D in the course."

I deposited my car in a parking lot and then Miklos and I walked toward my apartment building.

"So you attended the university in

America, Ferencz?"

"Yes," I said. "I have a bachelor's degree and have recently acquired my master's. Also I have filed my application for a position with the State Department and I have every hope that I will be accepted."

"You wish to be sent to the American Embassy in Budapest?"

I shook my head. "No. I have requested Iceland, for I have developed an interest in that country. The subject of my master's thesis was the Iceland-Egyptian dispute, and I have passed this document on to the Department along with my other qualifications."

We entered my apartment building and went to the stairs, for my quarters are but on the second floor.

"You are not married yet?" Miklos asked.

"No."

He smiled. "Back home you were always a dreamer, Ferencz, waiting to find the perfect girl."

"But she exists," I said. "Somewhere. I know it. I feel it."

He shrugged. "Perhaps. But if she lives in Tibet, this would present some difficulties, no?"

Most of my friends had already gathered inside my apartment and I made the introductions.

It was Irene O'Reilly who interested Miklos the most.

She has green eyes, somewhat reddish hair, and she works as a nightclub singer at a place called the Blue Feather.

She smiled slowly and looked Miklos over. "Whenever I think about Hungarians, I think of long distance runners. How does it happen that you do the broad jump?"

"Because between our farm and the village school there was a stream," Miklos said. "And this stream was twenty feet wide. For me to walk all the way over to the bridge and cross there took thirty minutes of my time, morning and afternoon. So at the age of twelve, it occurred to me that I could save considerable time if I simply jumped over the water."

She was impressed. "You mean that at the age of twelve you could broad jump twenty feet?"

"Not exactly," Miklos said. "I was sixteen before I came to school dry."

Toward eleven o'clock, I wandered out onto my small balcony which overlooks the street for some fresh air and a rest of the tongue. It was a warm, friendly evening with the fragrance of spring in the moonlight.

And then I saw her!

She had evidently just left the lighted drugstore across the street. She paused at the curb and zipped the wrapper from a pack of cigarettes.

She looked up.

I do not think she saw me, for I was in the shadow of the building, but as for me, in that one electrical instant, I knew that I had at last found the woman I had been searching for. It would not be necessary to go to Tibet.

"Do not leave!" I shouted down to her. "I will descend immediately."

I dashed back through the partying room and flung myself down the corridor and the stairs. A moment later, I burst into the street.

But she had disappeared.

She was gone.

Frantically I searched around the corners and ran about, but it was of no use.

She had absolutely departed.

When I finally returned to my apartment, there were questions.

"What happened?" Irene asked. "The way you rushed out of here, we thought the place was on fire or something."

"Nothing," I said. "It was nothing."

But later when I drove Miklos back to his hotel, I explained.

He thought about it. "Ferencz, this occurred after you had consumed several drinks, no?"

I frowned. "Are you saying that I imagine her?"

His smile was kindly. "Old friend, was there really such a thing as an Egyptian-Icelandic dispute?"

"I swear it. And I am positive that she is indeed a real woman of flesh and blood. She threw away the cellophane from the package of cigarettes and I feel certain that creatures of the imagination are not litterbugs."

At the hotel, Miklos paused a moment before he got out of the car. "Who was that large florid man who spoke such atrocious Hungarian?"

"Olaf Bjarnesson," I said. "He's taking the course again."

During the next week, I regularly picked up Miklos at his hotel and conveyed him to the nightclub in which Irene O'Reilly sang.

On Wednesday, as he got into my car, he said, "Ferencz, tonight I have arranged a date alone with Irene. Where would you suggest I take her?"

"Well," I said, "There is a little Hungarian restaurant..."

He frowned. "Look, Ferencz, in Hungary I can always go to a little Hungarian restaurant. Here let us try something else."

I gave him the address of a rather nice Icelandic restaurant on Thirty-fifth and then glanced at my rear view mirror. "It is a different car following us this time, Miklos. A Lincoln."

Miklos nodded. "Our Security Chief felt that we were contributing too much to Hertz Rental. So it was de-

cided that we would buy our own car."

"But a Lincoln? This is saving?"

"It has a good trade-in value and one must not forget this." He smiled. "When the vehicle is not in official use, we take turns driving it. I had the machine a half hour from five A.M. until five-thirty this morning. I am scheduled again tomorrow morning from two A.M. until two-thirty."

The next afternoon, it was necessary for Miklos to attend the track meeting which brought him to America and he took the chartered bus with his team to the stadium.

I, in turn, picked up Irene at her apartment and we became spectators to the sporting event. I congratulated myself on the foresight to bring binoculars for the arena was quite large.

"How are things with you and Miklos?" I asked Irene.

She seemed puzzled. "I don't know. This morning at two A.M. — just as it seemed that we were getting cozy—he suddenly jumped up and rushed out muttering something about it being his turn with Lincoln, or something like that. Anyway, I went to the window and I saw him get into a big car parked at the curb."

I nodded. "Do not let this disturb you. It will happen again from time to time."

We watched the running and leaping down below and finally it came time for the broad jump and Miklos. I fastened my binoculars upon Miklos and even from my distance, it seemed to me that Miklos appeared rather fatigued.

I watched as Miklos ran and sprang into the air a number of times. I am not an expert, but it seemed to me that some elan or spirit was wanting in his efforts and this was verified when the final results of the event were announced. Miklos took sixth place and I had the feeling that he might have taken seventh or eighth if there had been more contestants.

I peered at Miklos through the glasses again expecting to see utter despair, but found Miklos merely yawning sleepily. He brightened for a moment as he watched some rather graceful women contestants doing the four hundred yard run.

I raised my binoculars from his face and idly swept the audience across the arena.

And there she was again!

She appeared to be engaged in conversation with a man at her right. He was short and heavy—utterly repulsive in my estimation—and he seemed to be in his fifties.

I watched him quickly devour a hot dog and then immediately order another. I caught the glimmer of gold

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on one of his fat fingers.

My eyes widened. Could it be possible?

He and she married?

I looked desperately for her hand, but she had it concealed in some sort of muff.

Had she grown tired of waiting for me? Had she settled for second best? True, he must be rich or she would not condescend to let him touch her, but was money enough for happiness?

The two of them seemed to enjoy a joke together and they laughed.

I felt the fury rushing to my face.

I had to know.

I handed the binoculars to Irene. "Take custody of these. I shall return. Perhaps."

I ran down the steps of the aisle and paused a moment when I reached the bottom. No, I thought fiercely. I will not go all the way around the arena. It is an American saying—and I am now an American—that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line.

I hopped over the railing and began sprinting across the infield. Several officials in tuxedos observed my presence. They shouted and waved and I noticed that several of them took pursuit. It seemed that one of them even took a shot at me, for I heard the discharge of a gun.

But I would not be halted or distracted. I had but one specific goal in mind and no power on earth could—

There was a sudden blinding flash and an electric shock raced through every nerve in my body. And then blackness. Total blackness.

I do not know how long I remained lost to consciousness, but it was evidently time enough to carry me to what appeared to be a first aid room in the subterranean section of the stadium.

The doctor bending over me relaxed. "I think you'll be all right, but we'll transfer you to the hospital for X-rays, just to be on the safe side."

Miklos came into view. "Unfortunately you reached the far side of the stadium at precisely the moment when the sixty-yard dash arrived at its conclusion. It was quite a spectacle, for you bowled over the six runners in a splash of arms and legs."

I was not particularly interested, but I thought it proper to ask. "Was anyone hurt?"

"Nothing except minor abrasions and contusions to most. However the Russian entrant suffered a fractured ankle and a black eye, the latter of which he contends he did not possess until the Latvian contingent carried him through the darkness of a corri-

dor." Miklos frowned. "Ferencz, whatever possessed you to dash so wildly across the arena?"

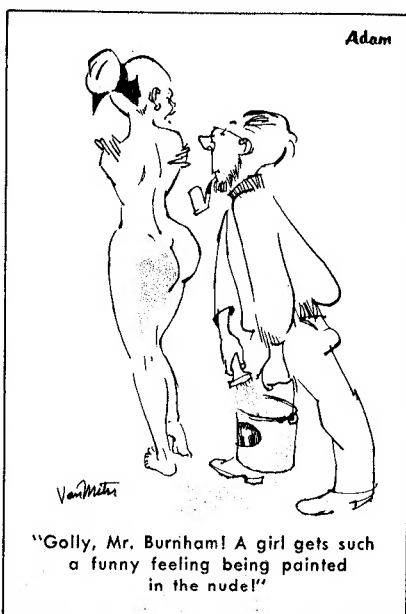
"I saw her again," I said bitterly. "This time with a fat old man who devours hot dogs and licks his fingers."

I was taken to the hospital, but the X-rays proved that nothing undue had occurred to me and I was released to the police. They, in turn, granted me my freedom after some formalities concerning disorderly conduct and bail.

That evening was the last Miklos was scheduled to be in America, for the team was to depart on the next day's afternoon.

I picked him up as usual and we drove toward the club where Irene O'Reilly sang.

Miklos was thoughtful. "Green eyes and red hair. This is one of the classic Irish types and I have always admired



the Irish, even though I have never seen one until I came to America."

"Of whom are you thinking?" I asked with great idleness.

"Irene," he said. "Did you know that she was born in the county of Tipperary in Ireland?"

I closed my eyes for a moment. I happened to know that Irene was born Irenka Dolozar and this occurred in Pennsylvania where her father was a butcher who specialized in Hungarian summer sausage. However I would not tell.

We drove rather silently and then Miklos spoke again. "Old friend, you seem rather silent this this evening. Is there some sadness?"

I nodded. "Some sadness and also some gladness which unfortunately is also mixed with some sadness."

He took first things first. "And what is this unadulterated sadness?"

"I cannot find her. She may be lost

to me forever."

He patted my shoulder. "And what is this gladness which is also mixed with sadness?"

"I have been accepted by the State Department and have received my first assignment."

"Ah," he said, "But that is good. You are going to Iceland?"

I sighed. "No. I have been assigned to Egypt."

I parked my car and we entered the nightclub and took our usual table.

Miklos ordered drinks. "Ferencz," he announced, "I have decided to defect to the west."

I smiled. "Good. You have decided that democracy is the superior civilization?"

He watched a cigarette girl pass.

"Well," he said, "there is that too."

I felt like a conspirator as I whispered. "But you must defect with caution. Remember Horvath and the gun."

He waved that aside. "We need not worry on that score. Horvath has decided to defect, too. I do not know exactly why, but I suspect that it is because there are so few Lincolns in Budapest."

It was at this moment that across the room I saw the man with the fat fingers. The hot dog eater. And he sat alone at a table.

I half rose and then sat down again. No. I would wait. Where he was, she was bound to come soon. My heart began to pound.

Miklos frowned. "What is it, Ferencz?"

"Nothing," I said elaborately. "Absolutely nothing."

And then she appeared.

She stood for a moment in the doorway and then joined the fat man.

I grasped Miklos by the sleeve and pointed. "There! There!"

He looked and nodded. "He is defecting too."

I blinked. "The fat man? He is Horvath?"

"No," Miklos said, "That is Julius, our Security Chief, and he likes America too."

"And the girl? She is his wife?"

"No," Miklos said, "That is Horvath. Mariska Horvath. Julius is her uncle." He smiled. "Since it has been her job to follow me, she has seen you many times, Ferencz. But I doubt if you have ever set eyes on her before. She is very clever."

I rose in a daze and approached the table.

When I met those violet eyes—and when she smiled at me—I knew for a cosmic certainty that while she might be rather fond of Lincolns, that wasn't the reason she had decided to remain in America.